



National Cattlemen's
Beef Association



April 17, 2018

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture
United States House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture
United States House of Representatives
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson:

On behalf of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and the Public Lands Council (PLC), we write to express our support for H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018.

PLC represents an industry consisting of more than 22,000 public lands ranchers across the west, many of whom are members of PLC affiliates at both the state and national level. Our national affiliates include the NCBA, the American Sheep Industry Association and the Association of National Grasslands.

Initiated in 1898, NCBA is the marketing organization and trade association for America's cattle farmers and ranchers. NCBA is a consumer-focused, producer-directed organization representing the largest segment of the nation's food and fiber industry. NCBA represents 170,000 of America's farmers, ranchers and cattlemen who provide much of the nation's supply of food and are proud of their tradition as stewards and conservators of America's land.

Livestock Health

NCBA and PLC strongly support the prioritization of animal health initiatives in H.R. 2. Specifically, we are grateful for the establishment of the National Animal Health Vaccine Bank, which creates the first-of-its-kind U.S. vaccine bank for animal agriculture and prioritizes federal resources for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) preparedness. FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that has the potential to spread widely and rapidly, debilitating cloven-hoofed animals, such as cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and deer. Analysts estimate that a widespread FMD outbreak in the United States could potentially cost producers and taxpayers alike billions of dollars in the first 12 months alone. Establishing a U.S. specific vaccine bank is a critical first step towards protecting our nation's livestock producers. We are encouraged by the inclusion of mandatory funding for this important program, as we look forward to working with Congress to fully fund this initiative in the 2018 Farm Bill.

In addition, we support the prioritization of agricultural research in H.R. 2, and thank the Committee for its continued support for solutions to effectively eradicate Cattle Fever Tick from our domestic herd.

Conservation

H.R. 2 prioritizes working-lands conservation by retaining and folding the best features of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) into the nation's flagship incentive-based program for voluntary conservation—the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NCBA and PLC are pleased to see this common-sense



consolidation, along with a number of the proposed improvements and corresponding funds for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

Further, while we do not support the proposed acreage expansion under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), we are encouraged by the expanded opportunities and increased flexibility for owners and operators to use haying, grazing, and other management tools and support the provision to automatically make CRP eligible for grazing when the livestock assistance program is engaged because of drought.

Trade

Trade is extremely important to the U.S. cattle and beef industry because it allows us to maximize the value of each animal. USDA's Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program are proven, effective tools for building and expanding global markets for our industry. NCBA and PLC support the consolidation of MAP and FMD into the new International Market Development Program (IMDP), as we believe it will effectively protect and bolster funding for important trade promotion and market development activities.

Thank you for your consideration of our priorities. NCBA and PLC support the swift passage of H.R. 2, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, and we look forward to working with you as the farm bill moves forward for further consideration.

Sincerely,



Allison Cooke
Executive Director
National Cattlemen's Beef Association



Ethan Lane
Executive Director
Public Lands Council
NCBA Federal Lands